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125 How did they count things that did not exceed 6 in number?
802 If I put down 1 maize kernel, the Bakaïrî immediately answered "tokále," at the same time generally grasping the kernel and then the left little finger, but both so hastily and mechanically that, even if he did so, the process seemed needless. In the case of 2 kernels, he seldom omitted taking the fingers of both hands to assist. Particularly if I put down the kernels somewhat apart, he would always shove them together and then always grasp the left little finger and the ring finger before he pronounced the number. If I put down 3 kernels and asked the number, I was not once given the answer, either by Paleko and Tumayaua or others with whom I practiced less, until the little pile had been divided into 2 and 1: they would first touch the pair of kernels, frequently breaking them up, inspecting them, then on the left grasp fingers V and IV and say "aháge"; then they would grasp the single kernel, shove finger III to the left toward IV and V, say "tokále," and finally announce: "aháge tokále." The experiments proceeded in a similar manner up to 6. Little heaps of two kernels were always made, they were always touched, and only then the finger put to use.

The right hand touched, the left hand calculated. To count on the fingers of the left hand simply by looking at the kernels, without using the fingers of the right hand, was utterly impossible even with 3 items. The little heap of two had to be positioned properly with the hand. I placed 3, 4, 5, 6 kernels before Tumayaua, let him form the little heaps, but held his left hand: he would seldom count, or rather guess, correctly with 3; for the remainder he gave a random collection of "aháge" for good measure. Thus, both hands were indispensable when 3 items were to be counted; in an emergency one could do without the left, but never without the right.

801 In the legends and tales of the Bakaïrî, to keep this in mind
802 here, the number 2 is often mentioned.

The 3 also appears; the bagadú fish gives the deer 3 mandioca twigs which he is supposed to plant. Kamuschini cuts down 5 trees; cf. page 445. The storyteller needs 3 sentences in order

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801 to give us this information. "He cut down two pikf trees. He
802 cut down two more the same way. He cut down one."
Kamuschini brings the 5 trees into the house and sets them
against a mortar. Again 3 sentences, and, /409/ to be sure,
here, in the middle of the enumeration, the second pair of
trees is expressed not by the number word "aháge," but by the
indefinite "zagóno," the one or the others. Thus, the three
sentences run: "He set 2 against the mortar. He likewise set
the others against the mortar. The single one was put against
the mortar." Of course, the situation in this case need not be
quite as bad as it looks. Kamuschini cuts down different kinds
of trees, as Antonio also remarked to me. Thus, the storyteller
may have had in mind in each of those three sentences the dif-
ferent trees. Nevertheless, he would not have proceeded otherwise
with 5 trees of the same species, as I saw in the case of the 5
stars of Perseus; cf. page 425.

802 There is, of course, nothing to prevent them from reporting
accurately even in the case of 5 items, since they have number
words up to "6."

One of the stereotyped conversations had to do with the num-
ber of children. Even the Bakaïf who arrived from the second
village and had not yet been tortured by my experiments con-
fided to me during the first quarter hour that they had 1, 2, or
even 3 children, and in doing so used their fingers without ex-
ception. It seemed unheard-of among the Bakaïf that someone
calls "aháge aháge" offspring his own. Hence they got along
very well with the number words and the fingers.

In fact, they did not need higher numbers than they possessed.
In their simple circumstances, which were not beset with difficult
problems about property, a number of pieces beyond six played
no role. On their own initiative, they gave me the numbers for
the child statistics just mentioned and for the days' journeys on
the river, which from tribe to tribe always remained under that
limit. Their deficient arithmetic means a lack of intelligence
only insofar as it shows, to be sure, a limited economic horizon,
but has nothing at all to do directly with poor endowment. It

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first person plural inclusive and exclusive, familiar in the aba-heē, is alien to the Kxura-itano. Amaremo, "you," second person plural, is obviously of secondary formation: mo indicates plural, re is the emphatic particle, and ama is the pronoun for the second person singular.

Another series of lesser used pronouns: abe, nahe, kzidahe.

The adjective, generally put after the substantive, is, like the latter, affected by time and number. Comparatives are avoided. A concept close to that of the superlative is expressed either with the emphatic particle or by means of the addition of certain words such as kzuru, "indeed" (comparable to the French bon, tout de /238/ bon, kxura in the Bacairi has, among others, the meaning of "good"); Iwakukeba, "it is not a joke," etc.

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The determinatives are affected by time and number.

● 801

There are only three cardinal numbers: tokale, "one"; ahafe, "two"; ahewa or ahewanela, "three." Steinen gave to Antonio, the Indian who was his informant in the Xingú region, the following sentence, "At first he (the child) walks like an animal, on all fours," and obtained only: ca/uxbe ana/ito ara āhe iwodo adaxobodili, that is, "he walks with the two arms." To the minds of the Bacairis, rather than to produce a number four, it seemed easier to invent a whole story whereby Cemimu (Morcego /bat/) had a son by the daughter of Pau de Morcego /bat wood"; Andira /(Pōdiki), and, when he found out about the paternity, he became angry at the child, breaking its knees with an arrow; since then children walk first with the two arms before they walk with the two feet (6).

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6. The matter of knees seems to have caused the minds of the Bacairis much trouble. Mapinukai, one of their ancestors, had knees like those of a